

Youth Crime and Violence Prevention from a Municipal Policing Perspective Forming a Framework for the Future.

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Presented by:
Louis J. Blanas, Sheriff
Sacramento County

The Sacramento Sheriff's Department has developed strategies and programs that are designed to have a positive impact on youth and the prevention of violence in our community. The reorganization of the Department into six districts will focus responsibility for youth services in more identifiable communities. In the development of a community oriented policing philosophy the Department has made a commitment to several broad concepts. These concepts are frameworks that are both a foundation and a structure for our service to the community we serve.

Community Oriented Policing - The Department has made a commitment to the philosophy of community oriented policing and the commitment to work with the community to identify needs and priorities and work in partnership to address those goals. Areas of deterioration in the community are areas that breed crime and violence and need to be the focus of attention. Problem oriented policing works with the community to identify those problem areas and work toward a positive outcome. These programs seek to form a holistic approach to the community by recognizing the multifaceted nature of the challenge. The traditional reactive nature of municipal policing needs to respond to the new priorities. We now must be a major part of the solution to community challenges.

School Resource Officers - The Sheriff has placed a School Resource Officer (SRO) in each of the high schools in the unincorporated area of the County. These Officers are recruited and chosen to be a resource, mentor and counselor on each of these campuses. The School Resource Officer is not the "cop on campus" but rather serves to be a positive role model for the student body. Their responsibilities are to work with the schools to guide the students to mature development. Their presence on campus provides the students with a real person and someone that they can view as someone that can assist them with problems and challenges. School Resource Officers are not a faceless uniform but rather someone that can provide real assistance and benefit for the students. The School

Resource Officers have been on the campuses since the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year and have been an overwhelming success. The positions were funded by Federal Grant funds and will be funded through 2003. The SRO work a flexible schedule to be available when school is in session or significant after school activities are taking place. The SROs are all issued marked Sheriff's patrol vehicles to allow them to be available to their schools at all times. The success of the program has demonstrated the value to the schools to such an extent that we feel it would be advantageous to extend the program to middle and junior high schools. A component of SRO would be able to serve several K through Eight schools in the district. The program has been welcomed and warmly received by the school principals and administrators in all five of the school districts that serve the unincorporated area.

Safe Schools Program, San Juan School District - The Safe Schools Program is now in its 13th year of operation and is a partnership between the Sheriff and San Juan Unified School District to provide additional law enforcement services for community schools. More than seventy deputy sheriffs, detectives and supervisors are hired by the school district through the Sheriff's Off Duty Work Program to provide a Safe Schools Officer that works closely with the school community to provide a problem solving approach to reduce issues which may disrupt or present safety concerns to those that attend or work at the school sites. The philosophy of the Safe Schools Program is to combine the law enforcement experience with the school's educational experience to provide for a safe and secure learning and work environment. Safe Schools deputies are trained to handle all types of incidents including counseling offenders, complex investigations, issuing criminal citations and making arrests.

Youth Services Officers - With the reorganization of the Department into districts it was acknowledged that there was a need to have personnel that were dedicated at the district level to work on youth issues and concerns at the direction of the district commanders. Federal grant funds were allocated to place two Youth Services Officers in each of the six districts. These officers will work closely with the school resource officers and the district command to develop positive programs for the youth in the district. The Youth Services Officers will maintain a close liaison with both the patrol officers and Problem Oriented Police Officers in the district. The Youth Services Officers are empowered to form partnerships with community-based organizations and public service groups to address both positive programs and activities and negative influences in the respective districts.

North Area Teen Center - In May 1998 following a successful partnership between the community, Sheriff's Department and Campus Life organization, the North Area Teen Center was funded and opened for service. The mission of the North Area Teen Center is to provide a safe, drug and alcohol free environment for community youth in order to communicate, teach and model positive values and lifestyles through a balance of social, physical, educational and spiritual programs. The Center continues to explore new activities and pursue funding to enhance the services that can be provided. The North Area Teen Center is a noteworthy example of the efforts of the community in identifying a

need and making the commitment to provide the resources necessary to make their goal a reality.

Sheriff's Explorer Program - While the Sheriff's Department has sponsored and supported a Sheriff's Explorer Post for decades, the Department now has integrated the Explorer Posts into the education system as an after school activity and as a daily class schedule program. The program focuses on laws and legislation that effect young people. The paramilitary structure of the program also incorporates conflict mediation skills, life skills, leadership and physical fitness. The emphasis on integrity, commitment and responsibility offers young people the opportunity to interact positively with law enforcement officers. The Explorers also have the ability to earn either college or high school credits. The program currently has one post at the Sheriff's Headquarters and four more at area high schools with a sixth post to open in the new school year.

Media to Deliver the Message - The media can be a powerful ally to assist local law enforcement in delivering a positive message to the youth and families in the community. In Sacramento County the Sheriff's Department has developed a monthly television show, **10-8 in Service**, to show the community the workings of the Sheriff's Department and the other material of interest to the public. Two recent topics which have been televised are the dangers of drugs such as GHB and other illicit substances that are now making inroads into youth activities. We have also introduced a timely production on the impact of traffic accidents and injuries as viewed through interviews with law enforcement, families and the effected youth. These interviews provide a powerful message on a common hazard to our children. The media should be enlisted by every jurisdiction to be part of the collaborative effort to deliver a positive message to our youth.

Domestic Violence and the Impact on the Family - It is evident that children raised in households that are victimized by domestic violence will have a substantially more difficult challenge in adjusting to life and there is ample evidence that children from homes where domestic violence in common are more likely to grow up to be abusers. It is imperative that efforts are made to break that cycle of violence. The Sacramento Sheriff's Department has several innovative program pursuing that goal.

Domestic Violence Response Teams - In 1995 the Office of Criminal Justice Planning awarded a grant to the Sheriff's Department to undertake a collaborative with Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE). This collaborative teams a detective trained in domestic violence investigation and family violence with a social services advocate from WEAVE. The team works on complex domestic violence cases that have either consumed a large amount of law enforcement resources or has the potential for continued and escalating violence. The team works with the victim and abuser to both provide services and support to break the cycle of violence. The team will accompany the victim through the court process, assist with restraining orders, get emergency communication equipment, provide counseling, and anything else that will assist the victim and redirect

the abuser. The Department has placed grant funded positions into the program to provide one team for each of the six district commands.

Family Services Officers - Recognizing that there will be a delay in the time it will take a domestic violence case to get from the initial responding patrol officer to detectives and, if warranted, the Domestic Violence Response Teams, the Department has authorized grant funded deputy sheriffs to serve as a Family Services Officer in each of the six districts. These uniformed deputy sheriffs will serve at the direction of the district commander to provide a coordinated response to the victims of domestic violence. Upon receiving the reports of domestic violence incidents the Family Services Officer will re-contact the victim to determine if additional resources are needed and what steps can be taken to prevent further victimization. The Family Services Officer will work closely with the Domestic Violence Response Team for the district. The Family Services Officer will be aware of persons in the district that are on probation for domestic violence and will be informed of domestic violence warrants that are issued for persons residing in their respective districts. The Family Services Officer will develop contacts with community-based organizations that can assist victims and abusers in domestic violence households.

Main Jail Domestic Violence Housing Unit - Every person arrested in Sacramento County for a charge of domestic violence that does not post bail and is held in custody may volunteer to be housed in the Main Jail in the Domestic Violence Housing Unit. This special housing unit places all domestic violence offenders in the same place in the jail and is staffed by specially trained officers. This unit provides domestic violence abuse counseling and special training aimed at breaking the cycle of violence. This program is unique in the nation as it focuses on pre-trial offenders rather than post conviction treatment. The program is partially funded by the proceeds of the Inmate Welfare Fund.

Child Protective Services and drug endangered children - The Sacramento Sheriff's Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop programs which provide for the safety of children and identify those children at risk in the community. Child Protective Services has established memorandums of understanding with local law enforcement to insure that at risk children are provided with the appropriate level of services. CPS and the Department have established procedures to insure that children found in homes where drugs are used and/or manufactured are taken into protective custody and appropriate medical care and baseline tests are administered to determine if toxic conditions exist. CPS also has a social worker assigned and housed at the Sheriff's Department Child Abuse Bureau to provide a continuity of services to the children and their families.

Conclusions - The continuing evolution of the Community Oriented Policing model in the Sacramento Sheriff's Department has allowed for the development of new and refined programs and practices that will unite the community we serve with their law enforcement agencies and public safety providers. Developing partnerships with the schools and educational institutions will place an early emphasis on preventing crime

and preparing our youth for the future. This philosophy allows the community and law enforcement to tailor responses to local community needs. Addressing the challenge of youth crime and violence prevention requires all the skill and resources of the traditional model of law enforcement but it also requires much more. Society is becoming more sophisticated and more knowledgeable about all of the workings of government. The explosion of information available through the Internet and other sources are bringing degrees of community expectations that have been unheard of in prior years.

We now must define the challenge and calculate our response to the more knowledgeable public. The public will demand to know why successful programs from other jurisdictions that are available are not being offered or presented in their communities. Law enforcement must have the technology and the capability to stay abreast of developments in all areas and to acquire the technology necessary to remain competitive.

Federal grants have provided us with the opportunity to develop and implement programs that we had not been able to fund in the past. As demonstrated, many of our school-based programs were made possible by the expenditure of federal grant funds. These federal grants with the three-year time frame are a valuable means to demonstrate the viability of programs but as these grants expire the programs must be assumed as local-funded programs. Without adequate stable resources, many jurisdictions cannot continue even very valuable and successful programs without adversely impacting their primary law enforcement mission.

State grant funds have been very valuable because the funds come with few restrictions and that permits the local agency to develop and implement local programs that address local community needs. Local government, particularly the urban counties, have never fully recovered from the funding realignment that took place during the economic recession. The ability to fund programs continues to be negatively impacted by that economic downturn.

The common goal is to raise the next generation of children to take their rightful place as mature, productive and contributing members of society. Providing a safe and healthy environment which aids in their development requires the dedicated efforts of the community, educational institutions, government, and most of all parents and family. Though a collaborative effort of all on these components we can leave the next generation with an even greater legacy.

Recommendations:

1. Education must be a principal centerpiece in the effort to direct youth and prevent criminal behavior. Funding for collaborative efforts between local public safety and educational institutions must remain a high priority. Limiting student and faculty fear

on campus will greatly enhance the educational experience. Deterioration of a feeling of personal safety while on school property limits and inhibits the learning experience.

2. Both the school nursing program and the availability of school counselors are components of education that have been drastically limited over the years to the detriment of today's student population. Providing these two valuable components of the educational experience will return a measure of stability, preparation and healthy development to our youth. The presence of school counselors and school nurses will add strength to the foundation of developing our youth for the future.

3. Provide funding for local agencies to acquire technology and equipment to support programs. Funding should have sufficient flexibility to allow for local programs to tailor their response to local community needs. The rapid evolution of technology demands that law enforcement keep pace with these developments and the ability to access what is being offered in other areas. As the public continues to gain greater access to information, it will become increasingly important for government to be prepared to respond in meaningful and appropriate ways.

4. A designated state agency should be charged with the responsibility to provide a clearinghouse of information and data that will explain programs and practices that work to address the topical issues. This clearinghouse would serve to assist local agencies in developing programs that have been proven successful in other jurisdictions.

5. Funding for the Department of Justice Cal-Gangs Data Base must be adequate to serve the jurisdictions that have information on criminal gangs and organizations. Gangs that move around the State and nation have a corrupting influence on the youth of these communities and local law enforcement needs this tool to deal with the highly mobile nature of these criminal enterprises. Cal-Gangs Data Base is an asset that is an issue of stateside concern and must have appropriate support and funding.

6. Local jail facilities benefited from massive infusions of financial aid in the 1980's and 90's. The local juvenile detention facilities must have a similar level of support. Overcrowding of juvenile halls and juvenile detention facilities has reached crisis levels in many jurisdictions. Even with alternative to incarceration practices being implemented at the local level, there are many counties that just do not have the space available to house juvenile offenders that cannot be released or sufficiently monitored in the community.

7. Juvenile probation is a cost effective and successful method of dealing with youthful offenders. Enforcing the probation orders and effectively monitoring of youthful offenders in the community demonstrates that offenses have consequences and responsibilities have rewards. The support for probation as an option has been significantly eroded by financial uncertainties and the shift from local control of the courts to state controlled Trial Court Funding. Probation as a county responsibility for a judicial program has ended with probation departments being often left out of the mix.

Support for probation conditions and consequences have a powerful deterrent effect on youthful offenders.

8. Sacramento County supports a Child Death Review Team that critically examines every death of a minor in Sacramento County to determine the hazards to children and young adults in the community. This review can identify trends and causal factors to develop policy and practice for selected disciplines. Bringing representatives from health, human services, mental services, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, coroner and children's services groups provides a comprehensive review of each fatality. While other counties have Child Death Review Teams which review violent deaths, the Sacramento model reviews all deaths, which can aid in policy development.

9. Despite all of the efforts of community, law enforcement, public agencies, schools, churches and the myriad others with a stake in making the community a safe and healthy place to raise our children, the most important component is a strong family. Values learned and practiced in the home will have the most powerful impact on the children. Providing strength and cohesion in our families will have the greatest impact on preventing youth crime and youth violence.

Thank you for this opportunity to express these thoughts and urge that this important work be successful in it endeavor...